



U.S. House of Representatives



NYC Council

February 20, 2018

Caroline Decker
Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications
Amtrak, Government Affairs
One Massachusetts Ave, NW
Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Amtrak Elevated Infrastructure
23rd Avenue between 36th & 35th Streets
Astoria, NY 11105

Dear Ms. Decker:

We are writing to express our profound disappointment with Amtrak's consistent dereliction of duty to maintain its properties and mitigate the impacts of their negligence on the surrounding communities. You may not be familiar with our districts, but we and our constituents are very aware of Amtrak and its poor track record of being a good neighbor.

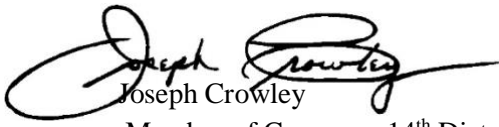
An elevated Amtrak rail line cuts through our districts from north to south. This line connects to the Bronx, New York City's gateway to the Northeast region, and extends into Brooklyn. While its vital importance to our economy is indisputable, that does not provide carte blanche to disregard how the infrastructure affects the communities it has a physical presence in. Specifically, the public right of way located underneath and adjacent to the rail line at 23rd Avenue between 36th and 35th Streets is in extremely poor condition. The cracked, uneven, and completely fractured pavement renders the public right of way absolutely inaccessible and unsafe for pedestrians. Pictures depicting the current conditions are enclosed.

This issue has been brought to the attention of the Northeast Supported Services Field Staff. The response our offices have received is that Amtrak has absolved itself of the responsibility to maintain the public right of way and asserts that the local municipality should repave and reconstruct the area of concern. In New York City the responsibility to maintain the good condition of the public right of way is exclusive to the property owner. And, Amtrak is the undeniably the property owner.

It is shameful that a federal agency has such a concerted disregard for the communities it most directly affects and touches. The residents of Astoria deserve to be able to walk on the sidewalk without fear of tripping into a gaping hole. It is a basic expectation that, unfortunately, Amtrak has failed to deliver on. Beyond that, the lack of care and concern for the neighborhoods Amtrak does business in is not limited to this location alone. In fact, Queens is replete with glaring examples of Amtrak's abdication of their responsibility to maintain their properties. One does not have to go far to find weed choked Amtrak owned lots being used as dumping grounds

It is our sincere hope that Amtrak will change its course and do what's right. Caring for and respecting the communities the agency passes through should be the part of the mission. We welcome the opportunity to have a renewed partnership with Amtrak whereby consideration for the well-being of the community is a guiding principle of the decision-making process. We are happy to discuss this topic in further detail. Please feel free to reach out to us so that we may speak about these matters in a more productive fashion.

Sincerely,



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress, 14th District



Costa Constantinides
Member of NYC Council, 22nd District

Encl: Pictures

